THE

SPREAD OF BUDDHISM INTO TIBET

Compilation from Various Sources

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SPREAD OF BUDDHISM INTO TIBET { \$\frac{2}{3}}

The land of *Tibet* is called Phö [bod] in the Tibetan language; a name that some texts say derives from the pre-Buddhist religion of Bön. The name *Tibet* probably derived from the Mongolian word *Thubet*.

As recounted in traditional Tibetan sources, in the distant past, the land of Tibet arose above the waters. This aspect of the origin story of Tibet corresponds to current scientific information on the area's geographical history. In the distant past, much of what is now the Tibetan plateau was in fact under water. Approximately 40 million years ago the Indian land mass collided with Asia and began to slide underneath the Asian land mass, eventually lifting up land that had been under sea. One result was the formation of the Himalaya, the world's highest mountain ranges, along with the huge high-altitude plateau that came to be known as Tibet.

Tradition has it that Tibet is the land of Avalokiteshvara, the Buddha of compassion, and the Tibetan people are his descendents. They trace their ancestry to the copulation of an ape, an emanation of Avalokiteshvara, and an ogress, an emanation of Tara, the Buddha of enlightened activity. Their progeny gave birth to the Tibetan people in the Yarlung valley, which is located about 100 kilometers southeast from Lhasa.

Tibet's oldest spiritual tradition is Bön, which is a system of shamanistic and animistic practices. Scholars trace the origin of Bön to *Zhang Zhung*, an ancient land located either in the region now known as Western Tibet or somewhere between Mount Kailash and *Tag-Zig* (ancient Persia). It is probable that Bön itself adopted foreign elements, such as the influence of Iranian cosmology, before its appearance in Tibet. Although Bön and Tibetan Buddhism were often at odds and occasionally underwent periods of rivalry, their relations were generally characterized by peaceful coexistence and doctrinal

interdependence. Each religion influenced the development of its counterpart, resulting in significant differences between what is known of Bön prior to the advent of Buddhism and the *reformed*, syncretic tradition that exists today.

CHRONOLOGY OF BUDDHIST TRANSMISSION TO TIBET

5th century B.C. - BUDDHA SHAKYAMUNI turned the wheel of Dharma.

2nd **century B.C.** - Per popular myth, the first king of Tibet came from India.

Cast out by his people, he wandered north, eventually coming to Tibet. In another version he was an Indian king called RUPATI, who fled over the Himalayas after his defeat in the Mahabharata war. The first people he saw asked him where he had come from. Not understanding their question, he pointed to the sky. Those who saw this decided that he had descended from the heavens and proposed to make him their king. They placed him on their shoulders and carried him to their village, and so he came to be known as NYATRI TSENPO, meaning Neck-Enthroned King. According to legend, he built Tibet's first house and began introducing Indian civilisation. He is considered to be the first king of the earliest ruling dynasty of Tibet, which had its capital near the Tsangpo river in the Yarlung valley.

2nd century C.E. - During KING LHA THO-THO-RI NYENTSEN'S reign, some Buddhist texts & relics consecrated to Avalokiteshvara arrived in Tibet from India.

According to some accounts the king had a dream that in the future, after four generations, people would come to understand the meaning of the text. Because he feared the opposition of his Bön-po ministers, the king claimed that the text and relics had fallen from the sky.

7th century CE King Songtsen Ghampo - షే్స్ 'నెక్స్ 'షెఫ్స్' - [617-649/650] Thönmi Sambhota - షేన్ స్ట్ 'నెస్' 'సెస్'

King Songtsen Ghampo is the first of the *Three Dharma Kings*, and he is regarded as an emanation of Avalokiteshvara. He moved the capital to Lhasa and built a palace on the hill [later expanded into the Potala]. After his two most important wives — Bhrikuti Devi [from Nepal] and Wen Cheng [from China] — converted him to Buddhism, he built the *Ramoche*, the *Jokhang* and *Tradruk temples*. King Songtsen Ghampo sent Thomi Sambotha to India where he developed the standard Tibetan script and grammar in dependence on a northern form of the Indian Gupta script.

1ST DISSEMINATION -

NYINGMA - またばい - TRADITION

8th century CE

King Trisong Detsen - ඛූ:බූ්දු වූ අුප්ත් [742 ca. - 797] Shantarakshita - මු:අය්ස්

PADMASAMBHAVA - प्रमुद्गःग्राम्

KING TRISONG DETSEN, who is regarded as an emanation of Manjushri, is the second of the *Three Dharma Kings*. He invited the great Indian adepts Shantarakshita and Padmasambhava to Tibet. King Trisong Detsen, Shantarakshita and Padmasambhava, together, built the first Buddhist monastery Samye Ling, where the first monk ordination ceremony was held for seven Tibetans. The arrival and teachings of Shantarakshita and Padmasambhava

in Tibet mark the beginning of the NYINGMA tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. The name Nyingma literally means the old one, in the sense of being the earliest Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

Shantarakshita primarily propounded Sutric teachings in Tibet.

Padmasambhava mainly promulgated Tantric teachings [e.g., DZOGCHEN, Nyingma's unique tradition of highest tantra]. Since the study of logic and Buddhist philosophy and logic was not well established, tantra teachings and practice were extremely secret. At that time, Guru Rinpoche realized that the time had not arrived for many of his teachings to be revealed because very few Tibetan disciples were sufficiently ripened. In order to benefit future generations throughout the Tibetan cultural region, he hid hundreds of Treasures in the forms of scriptures, images, and ritual articles along with instructions for their revelation.

King Trisong Detsen understood the need to translate Buddhist texts into Tibetan, so he invited translators from India, Kashmir, and China to work on this project, and he sent young Tibetans to India for training. Tradition records that 108 Indian scholars worked with Tibetan translators to translate Buddhist literature into Tibetan.

SAMYE MONASTERY was the only Nyingma monastery in Tibet until the 12th century when NECHUNG MONASTERY was built in Central Tibet and KATHOK MONASTERY was founded in Kham because, unlike other Buddhist traditions, some centuries passed before the Nyingma tradition became institutionalized. From the 15th century onwards, great monastic universities were built in Kham and Amdo. Monasteries in Kham province include: MINDROLING, DORJE DRAG, PALYUL, DZOGCHEN, and ZHECHEN. Amdo monasteries include: DODRUPCHEN and DARTHANG.

For many years in exile, the Nyingma tradition was headed by **H.H. DILGO KHYENTSE RINPOCHE** until his passing. Some other contemporary masters include: **MINLING TRICHEN RINPOCHE**, who

was the head of the Nyingma tradition until his recent death, TRULZIG RINPOCHE, TAGLUNG TSETRUL RINPOCHE, and PENOR RINPOCHE.

9th century - End of the YARLUNG, ペススプ DYNASTY¹

KING RELBACHEN - エベングで [reign: 815-838]

KING LANG DARMA - 預ちちゃる [reign: 838-842]

KING RELBACHEN, the third of the *Three Dharma Kings*, is said to be an emanation of Vajrapani. He spent lavish amounts of money on the construction of temples and monasteries, and supported visits by Indian scholars to Tibet as well as trips to India by Tibetan scholars. He also introduced a policy of alloting a group of seven households for the support of each monk. Further, King Relbachen sponsored a project to create a glossary for Sanskrit and Tibetan and to revise the written language in order that Tibetan translations could more accurately reflect the grammar and syntax of Sanskrit. Many highly trained translators like Yeshe-de formed committees of Tibetan and Indian scholars responsible for translating Indian texts into Tibetan as well as for revising the earlier translations according to standardized terminology.

Unfortunately, this golden period known as the *Era of Tibet's Religious Kings* soon came to an end: King Relbachen was assassinated by two of his ministers who felt that he had neglected his political duties due to his engagement in proliferating Buddhism.

King Relbachen was succeeded by Lang Darma, a Bön-po himself, who is reported to have vigorously persecuted Buddhism. After

some Western authors. Tibetan chronicles use an archaic name $-\frac{N}{2} \frac{1}{2} \frac{N}{2} \frac{N}{2}$

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¹ According to Matthew T. Kapstein [*The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation & Memory* (Oxford: 2000; p. 211)], *Yarlung Dynasty* is used to speak of the period of expansion and consolidation of a Tibetan empire until the decline of Central Tibetan royal power in the mid-ninth century by

a seven year reign Lang Darma was assassinated by a Buddhist monk (Palgye Dorje) as memorialized in the Tibetan Black Hat Dance. Lang Darma's death led to the collapse of the YARLUNG DYNASTY; the Tibetan empire disintegrated into small principalities and Tibetan Buddhist culture entered a dark period.

2ND DISSEMINATION KNOWN AS THE LATTER SPREAD OF THE TEACHINGS - 직접적기 및 기기

OR THE AGE OF THE NEW TRANSLATIONS - 피워지고연필고

10th century - {KING/LAMA} YESHE ÖE

GREAT TRANSLATOR RINCHEN SANGPO [958-1055] - वे के देने

지ヨエゼ ATISHA DIPAMKARA-SHRI-JNANA [982-1054] - 首首言はよる

మక్రార్గులు ఆమాగాలు - చాగ్రామ్మానులు -

During the period of political upheaval, interest in Buddhism remained strong in the northeastern and western regions of Tibet. Near the end of the 10th century the king of the western KINGDOM OF GUGE renounced the throne, became a monk and took the ordination name of YESHE ÖE. He sent 21 promising Tibetans to India and Kashmir to study Sanskrit and dharma.

All but two of the Tibetans died in India. The two who returned — RINCHEN SANGPO [958-1055] and LEKBE SHERAP — became prominent scholars and translators. They successfully spread the doctrine throughout the Tibetan cultural region by translating, teaching and establishing monasteries. Their return from India marks the inauguration of the second dissemination. The greatest Tibetan figure of this period was Rinchen Sangpo whose literary activity played a significant role in the Buddhist renaissance.

Lama Yeshe Öe's persistence, including the sacrifice of his own life, created the conditions for the great Indian master *Jo-wo Atisha* to begin teaching in Tibet in 1042. Atisha revived the doctrine and dispelled many prevalent misconceptions. He composed the famous text, *A Lamp on the Path to Enlightenment* which set the pattern for all *graded path*, *Lam Rim*, texts found in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition.

DROM TÖNPA, the most famous of Atisha's many disciples, consolidated Atisha's teachings and practice into the **KADAMPA** TRADITION.

The Kadampa monastery established circa 1073 at Sangphu was a center of study that inspired the development of three new Tibetan Buddhist traditions: Kagyu, Sakya, and Gelug. His Holiness the Dalai Lama has been transmitting and teaching the six major texts studied in the Kadampa tradition including (for the first time in February 2008): *Udanavarga - Compilations of Indicative Verse* [known as the *Tibetan Dhammapada*] compiled by Dharmatrata; and *the Marvelous Companion: Life Stories of the Buddha, Thirty-Four Jataka Tales* compiled by Aryasura; .

11th century The Kagyu Tradition - コッスコーラーンは、
MARPA CHÖKYI LODRÖ [1012-1099] - メス・ロー・ カッス・ロー・ カッス・ロー・カッス・ロー・カッス・ロー・カッス・ロー・ カッス・ロー・カッス・ロー

Kagyu literally means *teaching lineage*. The lineages of the KAGYU TRADITION of Tibetan Buddhism derive primarily from *MARPA CHÖKYI LODRÖ* [1012-1099]. Marpa trained as a translator and then travelled three times to India and four times to Nepal in search of Buddhist religious teachings. He studied at the feet of 108 spiritual masters and adepts, principally *NAROPA* [1016-1100] — the main disciple of the great Mahasiddhi Tilopa [988-1069] — and *MAITRIPA*.

Marpa brought these lineages to Tibet, passing them on to his foremost disciple *MILAREPA*. Milarepa, the most celebrated and accomplished of Tibet's tantric yogis, achieved enlightenment in one lifetime.

Among Milarepa's disciples, GAMPOPA and RECHUNGPA DORJE-TRAG were the most illustrious. Gampopa received and transmitted the unique tantric teachings of the Kagyu tradition: the teaching and practice of the Great Seal (Mahamudra) and the Six Yogas of Naropa as synthesized by Milarepa into one lineage. That combined lineage from Gampopa came to be known as DAKPO KAGYU (dwags po), the mother lineage of the Kagyu tradition which proliferated numerous sub-lineages.²

Four illustrious disciples of Gampopa established four lineages of the Dakpo Kagyu: TSELPA KAGYU, BAROM KAGYU, PHAGDU KAGYU, and KARMA KAGYU.

The KARMA KAGYU TRADITION was founded by the Ist KARMAPA DÜSUM KHYENPA. This tradition has remained strong and successful due in large part to the presence of an unbroken line of the founder's successor reincarnations.

The four main disciples of the XVIth KARMAPA RANGJUNG RIGPE DORJE [1927-1981] were: Shamar Rinpoche, Gyaltsab Rinpoche, Tai Situ Rinpoche, and Jamgön Kongtrül Rinpoche.

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² KHYUNGPO NELIOR (d. Ca. 1135), a contemporary of Gampopa, established a separate Kagyu school, the *Shangpa Kagyu tantric tradition*. Kapstein p. xviii.

The PHAGDU KAGYU TRADITION developed eight sub-schools of which three survive to the present day: DRIKUNG KAGYU, TAGLUNG KAGYU, and DRUGPA KAGYU. The other five sub-divisions — TROPHU, MARTSANG, YELPA, SHUNGSEB and YAMZANG — have ceased to exist at least as separate institutions.

The principal Kagyu monasteries are:

TSURPHU MONASTERY, situated to the northwest of Lhasa at Toelung, is the main monastery of the Karma Kagyu;

PELPUNG MONASTERY in Dergey, Kham is an institute for Buddhist textual study founded by the 11th Tai Situ Rinpoche;

DRIKUNGTHIL OGMIN JANGCHUBLING MONASTERy, located 150 kilometers to the east of Lhasa, is the main monastery of the Drikung Kagyu.

The XVIth Karmapa was appointed head of the whole Kagyu tradition after the Tibetan exile of 1959. His successor, **H.H.** the XVIITH KARMAPA, is the current head of the Kagyu tradition.

Other important masters of contemporary times include the late Kalu Rinpoche [1905-1989], Drikung Kyabgön Rinpoche, Tai Situ Rinpoche, Gyaltsab Rinpoche, Jamgön Kongtrül Rinpoche, Khamtrul Rinpoche.

11th century - The Sakya tradition is closely tied to the Khön - বার্নির' - ancestral lineage.

The Khön Ancestral Lineage, said to be derived from celestial beings, founded and continues to direct the Sakya lineage. The Khön are descended from *Khön Könchok Gyelpo* [1034-1102], the founder of the Sakya tradition.

From the doctrinal point of view, the tradition traces its origin to the great Indian *Mahasiddha Virupa* through *Gayadhara*. Gayadhara's disciple was the translator *Drogmi Shakya Yeshe* [992-1074], who travelled to India to receive teachings on the

Kalachakra, the *Lam-dre*, et cetera, from many Indian masters, and returned to Tibet. The *Lam-dre* (*Path & Fruits*) are unique tantric teachings of the Sakya tradition that ultimately lead practitioners to the state of Hevajra.

Mahasiddha Virupa \rightarrow Gayadhara \rightarrow Drogmi Shakya Yeshe (studied in India) \rightarrow Khön Könchok Gyelpo (1073 est. Sakya Monastery) \rightarrow Great Sakyapa Künga Nyingpo

Khön Könchok Gyelpo, who was one of Drogmi Shakya Yeshe's main disciples, built the SAKYA [GREY EARTH] MONASTERY in the Tsang province of central Tibet. Sakya is the name of the area surrounding the monastery, derived from the color of its grey earth. So the Sakya tradition is named for the location of the monastery. Könchok Gyelpo's son, the GREAT SAKYAPA KÜNGA NYINGPO [1092-1158], played an important role in systemizing Sakya teachings.

MONGOLS & SAKYAS

1246 - GODAN KHAN, grandson of CHINGIS KHAN, is converted to Buddhism by VEN. SAKYA PANDITA [1182-1251].

1253 - SECHEN KHUBILAI KHAN invests Sakyapa DROGÖN CHÖGYAL PHAGPA as religious preceptor of the Mongolian empire with secular authority in Tibet.

SAKYA PANDITA [1182-1251] was a fully ordained monk, a descendent of Künga Nyingpo, the head of the Sakya tradition, and one of the greatest figures in the early Sakya lineage. Circa 1246, GODAN KHAN, a grandson of CHINGIS KHAN, intrigued by Sakya Pandita's reputation, invited him to Mongolia to give Buddhist teachings. Sakya Pandita converted the Khan and many other Mongolians to Buddhism.

In 1253, after both Sakya Pandita and Godan Khan had passed away, the Emperor *Sechen Kublai Khan*, invited *Drogön Chögyal Phagpa* [1235-1280], a nephew of Sakya Pandita to his court. Phagpa invented a new script in which to write the Mongolian

language. Kublai Khan was so impressed by Phagpa's performance that he declared Buddhism to be the state religion of the Mongolian empire and the Sakyapa to be rulers over the three provinces of Tibet. Thus, Phagpa was the first person in Tibetan history to gain religious and secular authority over the whole country. He was succeeded by his brother, CHAGNA. Altogether, the Sakyapas ruled in Tibet for more than one hundred years.

TISHRI KUNGLO [1299-1327], the eldest of 15 grandsons of Sakya Pandita's brother, founded four dynastic houses: **ZHITOG**, **RINCHEN GANG**, **LHAKHANG**, and **DUCHO**. Only the last two have survived.

In the 15th century, the DUCHO DYNASTY split into two subdynasties known by the names of their *palaces* (*phodrang*): the *DOLMA PHODRANG* and *PHUNTSOK PHODRANG*. Succession to the position of head of the Sakya tradition, hereditary since the time of Khön Könchog Gyelpo, traditionally alternates between the two Phodrangs.

The present hierarchs of the two Phodrangs are SAKYA TRIZIN NGAWANG KUNGA THEKCHEN RINPOCHE [b. 1945] and DAGCHEN RINPOCHE [b.1929]. Sakya Trizin, who is the current head of the Sakya tradition, lives in Dehra Dhun, India. Dagchen Rinpoche is the founder of SAKYA THEGCHEN CHOELING in Seattle, Washington, U.S.A.

Like other traditions of Tibetan Buddhism, a number of subdivisions emerged within the main Sakya tradition, specifically, the *NGOR TRADITION* and the *TSAR TRADITION*. The Sakya tradition of the Khön represents the main trunk of the Sakya lineage tree in which the Ngor and Tsar tradition are branches.

The principal Sakya monasteries are Sakya Monastery, Nalanda in Phenpo, Lhankhang Chenmo and Ngor E-vam Chodhen in Central Tibet; Dhondup Ling and Lhundup Teng in Kham; and Deur Chode in Amdo.

Some of the contemporary masters of the Sakya tradition are H.H. Sakya Trizin Rinpoche, Dagchen Rinpoche, Chogyey Trichen Rinpoche, and Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche.

14th century - Je Rinpoche Tsongkhapa, Lobsang Drakpa [1357-1419] - ਵੁੱਧੇਕਾਪਿੱਛੇ ਤਿੱਧਾਕਾਪਾੜ੍ਹੀ ਯਗਧਾਪਾ,

GELUG TRADITION - ५वी त्युवासाया.

The name *Gelug* literally means *System of Virtue*, reflecting its reformist orientation profoundly inspired by the Kadampa tradition. JE TSONGKHAPA is one of the great figures of Tibetan Buddhism. He travelled extensively in search of knowledge and studied with more than a hundred masters of the Nyingma, Kagyu and Sakya traditions. A renowned scholar, meditator, and philosopher, his written works contain a comprehensive view of Buddhist philosophy and practice that integrates sutra and tantra, analytical reasoning, and yogic meditation. One of Tibet's great religious reformers, Je Rinpoche was a devout Buddhist monk who dedicated his life to revitalizing Tibetan Buddhism and recapturing the essence of Buddha's teachings.

Among his foremost disciples were GYELTSAB DHARMA RINCHEN [1364-1435], KHEDRUP GELEG PELSANG [1385-1438], and GYELWA GENDUN DRUP [1391-1474], the first Dalai Lama.

Of the major Gelugpa monasteries, GANDEN MONASTERY was founded by Tsongkhapa himself in 1409. Ganden Monastery was divided into two colleges, SHARTSEY and JANGTSEY. Before Je Tsongkhapa passed away he entrusted his throne in Ganden to Gyeltsab Je. This began a tradition which continues to the present day with each Ganden Tri Rinpoche (Precious Ganden Throne Holder) serving as the head of the Gelug tradition.

Ganden Monastery is one of the three major monastic universities of the Gelug tradition, the *Three Pillars*. The other two *Pillars* are Drepung and Sera Monasteries. *Drepung Monastery* was founded by Choeje Tashi Pelden in 1416. At one time it had seven branches but these were later amalgamated

into four - LOSELING, GOMANG, DEYANG and NGAGPA. Of these, only two colleges, LOSELING and GOMANG have survived up to the present time. H.H. the Dalai Lama inaugurated the newly reconstituted DEYANG branch in January 2008 at the exiled Drepung Monastery in Karnataka, India.

Another spiritual son of Lama Tsongkhapa, JAMCHEN CHOEJE SHAKYA YESHE, established SERA MONASTERY in 1419. Sera also had five colleges which were later amalgamated into two - SERA-JEY and SERA-MEY. GYALWA GENDUN DRUP, the first Dalai Lama founded TASHI LHUNDUP MONASTERY at Shigatse in 1447, which later become the seat of the reincarnation lineage of the Panchen Lamas. The LOWER TANTRIC COLLEGE, GYUME, established by JEY SHERAB SENGEY in 1440, and the UPPER TANTRIC COLLEGE, GYUTÖ, established by KHENCHEN KUNGA DHONDUP in1474 survive in exile India today.

Among the contemporary masters of the Gelug tradition are H.H. THE 14TH DALAI LAMA, KYABJE LING RINPOCHE, KYABJE TRIJANG RINPOCHE, DEMNA LOCHOE RINPOCHE, and LATI RINPOCHE.

H.H. the 14th Dalai Lama is considered the spiritual and political head of the Tibetan people. Although he is traditionally a Gelugpa lama, he is not the head of the Gelug tradition, for he is not the Geluk throneholder, the *Ganden Tri Rinpoche*.

The assent to political leadership by the Dalai Lamas started with the THIRD DALAI LAMA SONAM GYATSO [1543-1588]. In 1578 he accepted an invitation to visit ALTAN KHAN, chief of the *Tumed Mongols*. This event marked the transition of the Gelug tradition from an order that avoided politics into a ruling theocracy.

Although they no longer controlled China, the Mongols were still a powerful military force in Asia, and Altan Khan was the most influential Mongol chieftain of his day. When the Lama and the Khan met, the latter conferred the title of *Ta le*, or *Ocean*, on Gyelwa Sonam Gyatso, implying that he was an *Ocean of Wisdom*. Thus, all the reincarnates of Gyelwa Sonam Gyatso's lineage, his

successors and retrospectively his predecessors (Gyelwa Genduen Drub and Gyelwa Gendun Gyatso), came to be known as *Dalai Lama*.